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ABSTRACT

Literacy programs in the United States have taken either a preventive approach for children or a remediation approach for adults. A new approach, family literacy, involves both parents and children in literacy acquisition. The National Center for Family Literacy provides training and assistance to family literacy programs through a process called the Kenan Trust Model. This publication reports an evaluation of the effectiveness of family literacy programs in Indiana, West Virginia, and Kentucky. Data on parents were collected by interview, and teacher reports and test scores provided data on children's academic achievement. Results of the parent questionnaire indicated that as a result of the programs, parents developed a positive self-concept, helped their children with homework, attended school functions, better understood teachers' problems, and read to their children. Some parents were preparing for further education. Teacher reports and children's test scores indicated that those children who would have entered elementary school up to two grade levels below average were ranked in the top half of their class. Teachers reported that about 90 percent of family literacy program students were doing at least as well as other students in regard to attendance, academic performance, peer relations, and motivation to learn. Nine references are cited. (Author/BC)

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FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF THE KENAN TRUST MODEL FOR FAMILY LITERACY

SPRING 1991

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Last, but not least, special gratitude goes to the supervisors and teaching staff in the family literacy programs in all of the sites visited, the kindergarten and elementary teachers who took time from their classroom activities to provide data, and to those special, wonderful parents who allowed me to interview them as a part of the study. Your courage and dedication have set high standards for the rest of us and I am a very lucky person to have been able to meet and talk with you.

Finally, I hope I have been able to represent what all of you have told me in a way that may have some impact on those who read this report. There is no way to express the *emotion* that accompanied your input about the value of the family literacy program, but I have tried.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In general, literacy programs in the United States have followed a two-track system - a preventive track for children and a remediation track for adults. Family literacy, a relatively new phenomenon, focuses more on the "family" approach to literacy with the belief that it is important for the parent or primary care-giver to place a high value on the acquisition of literacy skills and to take an active role in the child's education.

The National Center for Family Literacy provides training and technical assistance for individuals interested in developing family literacy programs through a process called the Kenan Trust Model which emphasizes involvement by both parents and children in literacy acquisition. This model is being utilized in several states by a variety of agencies and organizations which are funded by federal, state, and local funding sources.

In the spring of 1991, a follow-up and evaluation program were developed to determine the effectiveness of the model in enabling the Center staff to reach stated goals. Interview guides were developed and field-tested and follow-up data were obtained in three states from local programs which had been identified as using the Kenan Trust Model. Interviews, either by telephone or in person, were conducted with parents who had participated in the programs. In addition, kindergarten and elementary teachers who had students in their classrooms who also had participated in Kenan programs as three or four year-old children were asked to rate those children in a number of concepts and to rank them in their class by quadrants, i.e. upper fourth, second fourth, etc. In some cases actual test scores were used for rankings.

Findings were reported in narrative, and when feasible, tabular form. In general, parents have developed a positive self concept, help their children with homework, attend school functions, better understand teachers' and administrators' problems, and read to their children (many couldn't before). Upon obtaining their GED certificate, they are either seeking employment, have already attained it, or are preparing for college or technical school training. Some are even completing college degrees. About one-third of them volunteer in the schools and they are dedicated to the task of keeping their children in school, regardless of what is required to do so. This is a complete change of attitude compared to what they previously held, toward the value of schools and education, in general.

The children, who would have usually entered kindergarten or elementary school at least one or two grade levels behind the average, are not only enthusiastic about attending school, but are also, in general, in the upper half of their class as indicated by test scores or rankings by their teachers. Many are in the upper fourth and a few are the top students in their classes. Teachers also indicate that about 90% of the students are doing as well as or better than the other students in regard to attendance, academic performance, relations with other students, motivation to learn, and probable success in school.

It was concluded that the Kenan Trust Model for family literacy enables the National Center for Family Literacy to reach the goals of improving parenting skills and academic abilities of adults. It also fosters the development of parents as role models for their children in regard to the values of education as indicated by their changed behavior in the home, toward the schools, and as community members. It was also concluded that the Kenan Trust Model for family literacy provides hope for finally breaking the cycle of illiteracy which has plagued the United States for so many years.

Further follow-up research was recommended to determine if the findings hold true over the next few years of the students' lives. Some recommendations in regard to research procedures were also provided.

INTRODUCTION

> For almost 25 years, the federal government has funded programs designed to assist the states and local communities in reducing the numbers of adults whose levels of basic skills are so minimal as to make them only partially functional in the workplace and in the community. As well meaning as the administrators of these programs have been, and as hard as federal, state, and local officials have tried, the federal initiative in adult literacy has been minimal, inefficient, and ineffective. (Pierce, 1988, p. 1)

As Pierce further indicates, a variety of reasons has caused this lack of accomplishment and he and other authors (Delker and Yakowicz, 1988; Foster, 1988; and Chisman, 1989) have indicated that new approaches must be taken since the "old" methods of fostering increased literacy have proven ineffective. In fact, Delker and Yakowicz (1988) indicate that the problems inherent with a large undereducated adult population are magnified with the 750,000 young people who leave school each year before attaining a high school diploma. Again, the reasons are numerous and the need is great for new innovations which will not only produce a more literate populace in the immediate future, but will enhance the possibility of maintaining that improved literacy for many years.

Although many kinds of literacy - technological, street, quantitative, prose, workplace, workforce - have been identified in recent years, one innovation which has generated much enthusiasm and hope has been the emergence of family literacy. Not to be confused with intergenerational literacy, family literacy incorporates goals which supercede the usual goals of the acquisition, by participants, of certain levels of literacy skills which most other programs promote (Nickse, R.S., and Associates, 1990). As stated in First Teachers: A Family Literacy Handbook for Parents, Policy-Makers, and Literacy Providers:

> With some exceptions, the traditional educational response to the problem has been a two-track system of both public and private sector programs - a remediation track for the adult in the form of adult literacy education or, more recently, workplace literacy programs; and a prevention track for the child through early intervention efforts, such as the Head Start program.
>
> Family literacy programs approach the problem somewhat differently. Although there is no single definition or single "family literacy model," these programs operate on the stated or implicit belief that it is important for the parent or primary care-giver to place a high value on the acquisition of literacy skills and to take an active role in the child's education in order for the child to do his or her best at school. Further, the more literate the parent or care-giver becomes, the more effective he or she will be in performing the necessary at-home and school-related tasks that support the child's educational development. (p.2)

The emphasis is upon the "family" with parents and children learning together in hopes that both will realize the value of education not only in their individual lives, but also in the family as a collective unit. Therefore, family literacy is perceived as a means of creating an awareness of important concepts and principles which enable family members to acquire skills to improve their "living" as well as their "learning" activities for the remainder of their lives. Their value of education grows in importance and guides their decisions relative to becoming involved in the educational and training programs in their home communities.

The importance of the family as an important unit in society has been discussed in much of the literature for years, but not much has been reported about the family as a learning unit. However, Proctor (1991), from his recent study of metaphors in adult education, has given credence to the importance of the family unit in our contemporary culture. Proctor proposes that metaphoric expression by individuals in any culture reflects the important aspects of that culture and he utilized "focus groups" of adults who were enrolled in weekend classes. Though the groups in his study provided a variety of responses, "all three groups seemed to hold one metaphor in particularly high esteem: family." (p. 72)

NATIONAL CENTER FOR FAMILY LITERACY

The National Center for Family Literacy, located in Louisville, Kentucky, is a private non-profit corporation, established in July 1989, with a grant from the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust. The purpose of the Center is to expand the efforts to solve the nation's literacy problems by assisting in the establishment of effective family literacy programs throughout the country. Towards this end, the Center's activities include: providing training and technical assistance to family literacy providers, administrators, and policymakers; material development; funding of model programs; and research, to ensure that practice informs research and research improves the quality of family literacy efforts. The Center's range of services reflects the ambitious nature of its mission, as well as the complexity of the nation's literacy issue, and demonstrates that these problems must be addressed in a comprehensive and systematic way, from the classroom to the board room.

In every aspect of its work, the Center emphasizes the importance of cooperation and collaboration among those organizations and individuals who are responsible for making family literacy programs possible, as well as effective. Nothing is more essential to the success of family literacy programs than the integration of services and resources, and this idea is represented in the family literacy model itself. Recognizing the complex system of factors that must be addressed in a family literacy program, the model's effectiveness depends on all of its components working together in order to break the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy. The model's components focus on five areas that meet the critical needs of the parents and children as individuals and at the same time address the needs of the family as a unit. Each component utilizes teaching/learning strategies which actively engage the learner in the process. The five components of the model are: early childhood education, adult education, parent time, parents and children together time, and human resources development, and when they work together the Center believes the model provides the foundation to meet the following goals:

1. Increase the developmental skills of preschool children to prepare them for academic and social success in school.

2. Improve the parenting skills of the adult participant.

3. Raise the educational level of parents of preschool children through instruction in basic skills.

4. Enable parents to become familiar with and comfortable in the school setting so that they will participate in the education of their child.

5. Provide a role model for the child of parental interest in education.

6. Improve the relationship of the parent and child through planned, structured interaction which increases the influence of literacy in the home.

7. Help parents gain the motivation, skills, and knowledge needed to become employed or to pursue further education or training.

Effectiveness of the Kenan family literacy model has been demonstrated in research at seven Kenan Model Family Literacy programs during the period 1988-1991. Parents in those programs learned to support their children's education and children developed the skills necessary for success in school. The model is only effective, however, if it is implemented fully. Teachers must receive training in proper implementation of the model's individual components. In addition, teachers must be trained in ways to integrate the components into a unified family literacy program. The National Center for Family Literacy provides such training.

At NCFL's implementation training instructors in early childhood, adult education, and teacher assistants spend five and a half days learning the basics of family literacy while developing their roles as members of teaching teams. Participants learn to plan a total program that focuses on the importance of the family as a unit. At the end of training, team members can design a physical and social environment conducive to active learning; create a daily routine which includes the elements of planning, action, completing, and evaluation; establish goals of instruction which enable both adults and children to become independent life-long learners; facilitate, guide, and support the learner in all areas of the program with appropriate materials and methods; and understand assessment, both informal and formal, as a planning tool as well as an evaluation instrument.

Implementation training has served as the impetus for successful family literacy programs across the country. All the teachers involved in this study attended implementation training conducted by NCFL staff. This study shows that participation in the sampled family literacy programs had a positive and, to this point, lasting impact on parents and children. These findings indicate that the family literacy model was implemented effectively at the 14 programs included in this study. This provides strong evidence that the teacher training provided by the National Center for Family Literacy effectively achieved its goals.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Although programs funded by the National Center for Family Literacy had been operating for several years, follow-up data had been obtained on only a few of them - those funded directly through the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust. Those consisted of four programs in North Carolina and three in Kentucky. Therefore, data were needed from programs which were funded from other sources and in other locations.

The primary research questions which guided this study were:

1. What has happened in the lives of the parents since their involvement in family literacy programs? How do they feel family literacy involvement affected them personally and in their relationships with their children? Have their feelings about schools and school-related activities changed?

2. Has the program had any effect upon their parenting activities, i.e. discipline, amount of time they spend with their children, etc.?

3. How are children who participated in family literacy programs doing in school, particularly relative to other children in their classes? What data are available to document their successes?

4. Are parents continuing their involvement in educational activities? What problems must they overcome to even enter the program? And what prevents their continued participation?

5. What are good strategies for studying the impact of family literacy programs? How could those used in this study be improved for future research studies?

EVALUATION

Although not initially perceived as an evaluation per se, this follow-up study, by nature of the processes included, assumed many of the characteristics of an evaluation activity. As Steele (1990) has indicated, one of the greatest changes since the 1950s has been the emphasis upon *useful* evaluation. "It turns evaluation into a dynamic, positive force for enhancing programs and for increasing understanding of effective education . . ." (p. 260). This is particularly important in times of limited resources which most educational endeavors seem to be facing in the early 1990s.

A number of models for evaluating educational programs has emerged during the past several years. However, as Steele further indicates, many have little relationship to perspectives or needs and as such, do not facilitate the reporting of data for practitioner usability. In addition, Grotelueschen, Gooler, and Knox (1976) have stressed that often evaluations answer questions which nobody is asking and avoid those questions which are really important. Therefore, instead of trying to follow a particular model, or models, the approach in this study was to utilize what has been identified as the four major "approaches" to evaluation which Steele (1990) feels are not mutually exclusive, nor is any one any better than any other in all situations. Those four are:

> Proof of Effect - Are the results caused by the program or by chance? Usually structured within experimental and control groups, this approach must often be modified in educational programs because it assumes that participants can be isolated from outside influences other than the treatment (the educational program) and it assumes that the treatment is provided randomly. In family literacy, neither of those assumptions can be met, yet data can be reported within this approach sufficiently to indicate whether the effects can be related to the program itself.
>
> Judgment against Criteria - How does "what is" compare with "what should be"? The critical factor here is the qualities or levels of performance which have been advocated as acceptable to whomever is responsible for the program. In other words, what qualities or behaviors are most important? And to whom?
>
> Critical Questions - What questions are most critical to those who have the most "at risk" in the program, i.e. participants, teachers, policymakers, etc.? This approach is the most dynamic, of course, because the answers may vary from site-to-site, and the questions often keep changing as the evaluation proceeds. Some questions may require only descriptive data, while others may warrant comparative responses. What new questions developed as the study proceeded? And who determined that they were important?

Valuing - Sometimes considered subjective and therefore inappropriate, valuing examines the social, psychological, and possibly economic information which affects those who participate. However, these data must be reported carefully because different people may value the same thing differently. In addition, these findings may also be the most important to certain groups of individuals who are greatly affected by the program being considered. The researcher must also strive to not impose his or her values upon the reader, but to simply report those values which came from the participants.

STUDY PROCEDURES

The initial activity in this study was to determine which family literacy sites were following the Kenan Model of Family Literacy. One attempt to do this had been made by mail questionnaire to all previous participants in the implementation training conducted at the National Center for Family Literacy in Louisville, Kentucky. Almost 65% of the target group responded. Therefore, a telephone survey was conducted on the remaining 35% to ascertain whether they were working in a Kenan Model program. When the survey was completed, the research staff knew which sites had been reported as following the model.

Sample Site Selection

Although Kenan Model sites had been identified in several states, due to the limitations of cost and time available to conduct the research, purposive sampling was utilized for selection of the states within which programs would be studied - Indiana, Kentucky, and West Virginia. In Indiana, the family literacy program in Indianapolis was included as was the program in Lost Creek (Clarksburg School System), West Virginia. In Kentucky, however, the state legislature has provided funding for a number of family literacy programs under the name of PACE - Parent and Child Education. In deciding which programs to include, the following procedures were utilized:

1. The list of 30 sites for 1990-91 was reviewed to determine their geographic location. The state was then divided into four regions containing all programs.

2. Within each region, either three or four program sites were drawn at random, depending upon the number of programs in the region. This resulted in eleven programs being initially selected.

3. Once the scheduling for on-site visits began, the researchers learned that some of those sites in the sample were "first-year " sites. Since one of the purposes of the study was to determine how former family literacy students were doing in their studies in elementary school, all first-year sites were identified. Then, within each region, first-year sites were replaced with those which had been operating more than one year with the emphasis upon those which were oldest in time of operation. The number of sites remained constant.

4. The program in Newport was added to obtain data from an urban area. All of the other sites in Kentucky were in rural areas and Newport was the only multi-year site in an urban setting. Therefore, fourteen programs were included in this research study - twelve in Kentucky (PACE program sites) and one each in Indiana and West Virginia.

Instrumentation

Since on-site visits were to be made, the nature of the data collection assumed both qualitative and quantitative modes. The research instruments were primarily interview guides with specific questions included in case the individuals being interviewed did not address certain areas of interest. For example, parents were asked, "How has your life changed since you participated in the family literacy (or PACE, in Kentucky) program. As the parent responded, the researcher would record responses under appropriate headings, i.e., personal, family, education, etc. If an area was not addressed during the parents' responses, the researcher could then ask a more direct question about that area (or heading) so that some consistency could be maintained in regard to the data being acquired.

As is the nature of social research, allowances were made for needed changes in the interview guides as the research process continued. For example, when family literacy staff members were asked to rate their students in regard to their amount of improvement during the year in certain areas of endeaver, e.g., self-concept, motivation to learn, etc., staff at the first three sites visited suggested additional items which they felt were important but were not being included. Those, in turn, were added to the instrument. After piloting the instruments at the first three sites, one rating scale had tripled in size and two additional scales had been added. These, in turn, were then returned to the three original sites for the staff to complete in order to obtain complete and consistent data from all sites.

A number of anecdotal occurrences and incidents are also provided in the data presentation. These were obtained from both parents and family literacy teaching staff members during the interview process. Those deemed most important and relevant to this study are provided.

Quantitative data were obtained in the following manner:

1. Programs - indications of numbers of families being served and numbers expected to finish the year in the program; responses to rating scales and other related instruments, i.e., reasons why parents leave the program, kinds of linkages made with other community agencies and organizations, etc.

2. Parents - responses from the interviews being quantified to the extent possible; ratings of their progress by the teaching staff;

3. Children now in the family literacy (or PACE) program - ratings of their progress during the year by the teaching staff;

4. Children formerly in the program now in kindergarten or elementary school - ratings by present teachers on selected concepts; rankings in class by present teachers by quartiles (upper, second, third, or last); ratings by parents on selected concepts, reviews of student records (CTBS scores) when parental consent was granted; indications by teachers of whether the child had been retained or was enrolled in a "special help" class i.e., Chapter 1, "in-transition", etc.

Data Collection

Data were acquired during late March and all of April, 1991. Programs in Kentucky were scheduled by region to reduce travel time and costs as much as possible. Visits to other states were scheduled when Kentucky sites were least available, i.e., spring break, school or GED testing dates, etc.

Because of time limitations, the researcher spent only one day at each site. Upon arrival, the researcher contacted the family literacy program supervisor unless previously directed otherwise. The order of data collection usually depended upon the schedules of the kindergarten and elementary teachers who were usually interviewed, if possible, when their students were out of the classroom, i.e., in music class or at physical education. This did sometimes necessitate traveling back-and-forth between schools at one site, but the distance was usually not more than a few miles. However, because of time limitations, not all former family literacy students in any school district were contacted because various elementary schools were some distance apart and the school day had ended before the researcher could get to all of them. Parents of former students were interviewed either in person, by coming to the program site, or through a telephone call, whichever the program staff had arranged. Some parents were contacted on the week-end by telephone, but this was limited due to many parents not having telephones. The family literacy program staff members were interviewed at whatever time was most convenient to do so during the day.

PROOF OF EFFECT
FINDINGS - PARENTS

The findings are reported within each of the four approaches indicated previously - proof of effect, judgement against criteria, critical questions, and valuing.

Parents were interviewed either in person or by telephone in regard to how their lives had changed since participating in the family literacy program. The summarized data reflect topics which follow the interview guide. In each section, frequency of response determined the order of listing unless the number or percentage of responses is indicated as in some of the rating sheets.

Problems of parents in family literacy programs. Because many people are not aware of the magnitude of problems and barriers constantly faced by the parents who attend family literacy classes, those identified in this study are being presented before the findings. These data were not originally sought as a part of the study, but as the researcher began to listen to teachers describe some of the problems encountered by the parents in their program, the need to document those problems for the reader became apparent. At each site, staff members were asked to indicate if *any* of the parents in their program had encountered any of the problems listed on the inquiry sheet. Therefore, the magnitude of the problems is not really shown - only the fact that they exist among one or more parents in the number (and corresponding percentage) of programs indicated has been documented. *How many* parents suffer from these problems is not really known, but they appear to be somewhat common in the population being served by the 14 family literacy programs included in this pilot study as the following data indicate.

Table 1. Problems of Parents as Identified by Family Teaching Staff in the Fourteen Programs in This Study
n=14

Problem	Number of Programs	Percent of Programs
receiving public assistance	14	100
no transportation available or affordable	13	93
cannot afford a telephone	12	86
no credit available	12	86

Table 1 (continued)

Problem	Number of Programs	Number of Programs
has had relationship problems with a significant other	12	86
unable to attend class because of interference from a family member	12	86
has had marital problems	11	79
inability to plan for tomorrow	11	79
no group support (including family)	11	79
lacks even the most basic skills	11	79
was physically or sexually abused as a child	10	71
has had life threatened	9	64
has had some minor legal problems (bad checks, DUI, etc.)	9	64
family member has been arrested for a major crime	9	64
no driver's license	8	57
family members are alcoholic	8	57
substance abuser (besides alcohol)	8	57
has been arrested	8	57
has had utilities cut off for non-payment	8	57
family members are substance abusers	7	50
has been physically or sexually abused while an adult	7	50
family member has been imprisoned	7	50
alcoholic	6	43
family member has been murdered	5	38
has been raped	4	29
has been a child abuser	3	21
a suicide has occurred in the immediate family	3	21

Other problems identified by the staff in one or two programs included: no value of education; spouse has been a child abuser; child abused by someone other than a parent; mother is not actually raising the child and is uncomfortable around him; parent has no prior work experience; and family lacks proper medical care.

Parents' self-perceived changes since participating in a Kenan Trust family literacy program. Parents were asked to indicate how their lives had changed since participating in the family literacy program. The data have been compiled into categories which best describe the nature of their responses.

1. Personal changes

   A. Improved self-concept (almost unanimous)
      Feels proud for the first time in her life
      No longer afraid of challenges
      Better self-control
      Knows how to dress properly
      Wants to get off welfare and food stamps
      Feels like a *person*, not just a mother and wife
      Not afraid to speak in public

   B. More interested in doing things
      Has new friends (other program participants)
      Goes out more - not afraid of being in public

2. Changes as a learner

   A. Individual learning activities
      Reads newspapers, books, and magazines (didn't before)
      Reads encyclopedias in helping children find answers to questions
      Uses library - couldn't before

   B. Group learning activities
      Passed the GED test
      Passed parts of the GED test - working on the others
      Entered college or a community college
      Accepted into college or a community college - will start fall semester
      Learning new skills, i.e. reading, recall, math, writing
      Couldn't pass the GED, so re-entered high school
      Attends art school

   C. Feelings about learning (and education)
      More confident about ability to learn
      Has recruited family members into family literacy or adult education program
      Will make certain that my children will complete high school

No longer feel that I am ignorant and cannot learn
Has recruited friends into the family literacy program
Value of education has become positive
No longer afraid to try new things

3. Changes as a parent of children in school

   A. Child-related
      Helps children with homework
      More patience with children both at home and in public
      More compatible with *all* members of family
      Reads to children (couldn't before)
      Talks to children instead of spanking them so much
      Can tell my children the importance of school and *now* they believe me
      Will make certain my children stay in school
      Have many more books in the home
      Feed my children better
      Have more "quality time" with my child at home and while riding the bus

   B. School-related
      Now feel comfortable talking to school personnel
      No longer feel "out of place and anxious" at school
      Now belong to PTA and attend school functions
      Involved at school as a volunteer
      More aware of the importance of homework and attendance
      Better understand teachers' and administrators' problems

4. Changes as a person wanting to enter the workforce

   A. Already employed
      Now has a job (wages ranged from $4.15 to $4.67 per hour)
      Now has a part-time job; would like to work full-time
      Now a nurse's aide - want to become a nurse
      Like my work - more motivated

   B. Work or training desired
      Wants to become a teacher's aide
      Desire to become a nurse
      Want to become an elementary school teacher
      Would like to learn computers (word processing)
      Reads and responds to want ads
      Feels more comfortable looking for a job
      (Only one response) "Would like training in"- welding, office work, designing greeting cards, business school, health field, accounting, day-care centers, school worker, medical field, 911 dispatching
      Works better at home - keeps house cleaner

5. Changes in community participation

Attends school functions, including PTA
More active in church
Attempts to recruit others into literacy programs
Now part of "Adopt-a-Highway" program
Officer in Little League program - could have done so before now
Volunteers in kindergarten - couldn't have done it before now
Will "speak out" at meetings instead of just sitting there

Findings - Children

In order to enroll in the family literacy programs in this study, there must be either a three year-old or four year-old child in the family and the parent must have less than a high school equivalency education. For example, the summary statistics for the families enrolled in the Kenan Trust model sites - four in North Carolina and three in Kentucky - in 1990-91indicate that:

1. Over 90% were unemployed;
2. Over 66% were on public assistance;
3. Over 72% had annual incomes under $7500;
4. Over 65% were single-parent families; and
5. Over 77% were under 30 years of age.

As the reader can readily discern, these families usually have a "lower-than-desirable" value on learning and education. A more succinct description is found in *A Place to Start: The Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project:*

> Partly literate, partly skilled, home-bound, poor, often abandoned by spouses and without friends, run ragged by their children, they live without hope. Their ambitions - for themselves and their children - are confined within the walls of their tattered homes, imprisoned by their own bleak histories . . . In their isolation, these mothers and fathers begin programming their children for failure at an early age. . . Call it a birthright of underachievement, passed along at an early age. (p. 4)
>
> And it is now clearly established that a child's most important intellectual and emotional growth occurs before kindergarten: By the time disadvantaged children reach school, they may already be two years behind their classmates. (p. 8)

Because these children enter kindergarten programs behind other children in their academic abilities and social skills, they are likely to remain behind and eventually become "at risk" for dropping out of the school program in later years. It was hoped that through being in the family literacy program, these children would not only enter kindergarten with academic and social skills comparable to other children, but that they would remain comparable throughout their school years. To determine if the Kenan Trust Model was having any impact toward that goal, three kinds of data were obtained from the classroom teachers (kindergarten and elementary) of the children who had been in the family literacy program:

1. Ratings of the students on selected concepts by both teachers and parents (Tables 2, 3, 4, 5);

2. Ranking of the students within the class by quadrant - upper, second, third or lowest - as perceived by the teacher;

3. CTBS scores and data indicating whether the child had been placed in a remedial-type class, i.e. Chapter 1, etc. (first grade and higher) when parent permission had been obtained to review such data.

Ratings of Students on Selected Concepts: For the first criterion, teachers were asked to rate the former family literacy students in their classrooms in comparison to all other students in the room on a number of concepts which represent academic performance and social behavior. Class size usually was about 20 students. The following five-point scale was used:

1. Much below other children
2. Somewhat below other children
3. About the same as other children
4. Somewhat above the other children
5. Much above other children

Table 2. Kindergarten Teachers' Ratings on Selected Concepts of Their Students Who Had Been in a Family Literacy Program
n = 44

Concept	Ratings (percent of total)					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
self-confidence	0	20	30	43	7	100
attendance	0	7	36	16	41	100
academic performance	9	5	34	36	16	100
relations with other students	2	7	39	32	20	100
classroom behavior	0	5	34	43	18	100
motivation to learn	0	9	23	50	18	100
probable success in school (evidence of parental support)	0	11	32	41	16	100
is on-time to school	2	0	31	27	40	100
dresses appropriately	0	2	25	46	27	100
comes to school clean	0	9	16	43	32	100

Two additional questions were asked in regard to parental support and the responses to them were as follows:

comes to school sick	4% yes	96% no
parents volunteer in school	47% yes	53% no

For the most part, kindergarten teachers felt that their students who had been in the family literacy program were performing as well as or better than all of their other students. Almost one-half (47%) felt that those students' probable success in school exceeds that of their other students. In addition, almost half of the parents volunteer in some way in the school.

Table 3. First Grade Teachers' Ratings on Selected Concepts of Their Students Who Had Been in a Family Literacy Program
n = 28

Concept	Ratings (percent of total)					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
self-confidence	0	7	46	29	18	100
attendance	0	7	38	19	36	100
academic performance	3	7	25	43	22	100
relations with other students	0	3	43	39	15	100
classroom behavior	0	3	46	22	29	100
motivation to learn	0	3	33	39	25	100
probable success in school	0	7	39	39	15	100
(evidence of parental support)						
is on-time to school	0	3	22	43	32	100
dresses appropriately	0	0	36	29	35	100
comes to school clean	0	3	8	50	39	100

Additional questions and their corresponding responses were:

comes to school sick	4% yes	96% no
parents volunteer in school	25% yes	75% no

Again, teachers of first graders rated their students who had been in the family literacy program high in comparison to the other students in their room, particularly in their probable success in school. However, a lower percentage of their parents volunteer in school. In general, teachers' discussions with the researcher indicated that more of these parents are probably employed than were the parents of kindergarten students.

Table 4. Second Grade Teachers' Ratings on Selected Concepts of Their Students Who Had Been in a Family Literacy Program
n = 22

Concept	Ratings (percent of total) 1	2	3	4	5	Total
self-confidence	0	9	50	27	14	100
attendance	0	9	35	28	28	100
academic performance	0	9	31	32	28	100
relations with other students	0	9	37	32	22	100
classroom behavior	0	9	22	28	41	100
motivation to learn	0	4	35	52	9	100
probable success in school	0	9	32	41	18	100
(evidence of parental support)						
is on-time to school	0	4	42	32	22	100
dresses appropriately	1	0	35	50	14	100
comes to school clean	4	0	32	42	22	100

Additional questions and their corresponding responses were:

comes to school sick	14% yes	86% no
parents volunteer in school	32% yes	68% no

Because family literacy is a relatively new concept, not many programs have existed long enough to have former students at the third-grade level. A few of the PACE programs in Kentucky had former students at that level, but because some were not available to this study for various reasons, data on only four were obtained. Briefly, on the same kind of rating scale shown in the tables above, none of the four were rated below a "three" on any of the concepts and one was rated the top student in his class. In addition, none came to school sick and parents of two of them volunteer in the school.

For the final task in their interview, the parents who had been in the family literacy program were also asked to rate their children who had been in the program with them on the same selected concepts. Many of these families do not have telephones and the parents were not always available the day the researcher was at the school site. Therefore, only 53 parents were contacted for interviews. In some cases, they were parents of the same children rated by teachers, but that was the exception. Again, because the children were scattered among several elementary schools in a county, only some of the schools could be included in this study because of time limitations. Therefore, parents interviewed were often not those whose children had been included in the study. Their children were at other schools which were not visited. Also, because of the limited number contacted, no attempt was made to separate the responses by grade level.

Since the parents were simply rating their children as they perceived them and not comparing their children to others as the teachers had done in their ratings, a different rating scale was developed for them. Their ratings are shown in Table 5.

1 = very low
2 = somewhat low
3 = medium
4 = somewhat high
5 = very high

Table 5. Parents' Ratings of their Children Who Had Participated in the Kenan Model Family Literacy Program
n = 53

Concept	Ratings (percent of total) 1	2	3	4	5	Total
self-confidence	0	2	15	26	57	100
attendance	2	2	4	8	84	100
academic performance	2	2	4	24	68	100
relations with other students	0	2	0	32	66	100
classroom behavior	2	0	10	30	58	100
motivation to learn	2	0	8	10	80	100
probable success in school	2	0	4	17	77	100
pencil and paper skills	0	6	4	20	70	100
coloring abilities	2	0	11	20	67	100

In general, parents' ratings were much higher than teachers' ratings, but again, they were not comparing them with any other children. "Attendance" and "probable success in school" were rated highest of all. When questioned about why they felt their children would be successful in school, most replied, "That child will drop out of school over my dead body. [S/he] will not go through what I've been through."

Two items - pencil and paper skills, and coloring abilities - were added as suggested by teaching staff at the sites visited earliest. They were rated about the same as the other concepts, but occasionally, parents would indicate that their child could write in cursive in kindergarten for which they were proud, and in two instances, parents indicated that their child had won a poster contest through her or his ability to draw and/or color. (One note: The rating at the low end throughout the table was the same child - the parent was not pleased with his performance, but blamed the home situation - she had nothing but praise about the family literacy - PACE - program).

Parents' perceptions of how their children have changed as a result of being in a family literacy program. Parents were asked to describe any changes in their children which they felt were a result of the family literacy program. The responses have been categorized and the order of their listing follows the frequency with which they were given by the parents.

1. Changes in the home
   - Listen much better and *hear* what parent says
   - Pick up after themselves
   - No longer a baby - can leave mother without any trouble
   - Want to be read to more often
   - No longer shy around other people
   - Now do chores without complaining
   - Dress themselves
   - Sing songs learned in the family literacy program - never sang before

2. Personal Changes
   - Can work and play with other children
   - Much better at sharing, i.e. books, games, and toys
   - More independent (mature)
   - More outspoken - no longer hesitant to interact with others
   - More positive behavior - hope it continues
   - Have changed from wanting to play to wanting to "read and play"
   - Have acquired manners, i.e. "excuse me", "please", etc.
   - Talk more maturely - use proper words and sentences
   - Had a speech problem - it slowly improved during family literacy program

3. Changes in regard to learning/education
   Eager to learn everything
   On honor roll every time
   Anxious to go to school every day
   Have learned many basic skills (in kindergarten)
   Try harder - no more, "I can't"
   Were far behind at first - now can do as well as others in the program
   Much better attention span
   Talk about going to college - nobody in our family ever went

Rank in Class. These data are presented in two parts because programs in different states cannot provide the same kind of data in regard to rank in class. In most programs visited for this study, specific ranking data were unavailable. Therefore, since the classroom teachers were most knowledgeable about the relative abilities of their students, they were asked to mentally divide their class into fourths - top, second, third, and bottom - and place the former family literacy student(s) into one of those four levels when compared to all other students in the class. Those data are presented below.

Table 6. Rankings of Former Family Literacy Students by Their Present Classroom Teachers

Grade Level	Divisions (percent of total)				
	Bottom 1/4	Third 1/4	Second 1/4	Top 1/4	Total
Kindergarten (n=44)	11	14	39	36	100
First (n=28)	5	16	21	58	100
Second (n=22)	4	9	50	37	100
Third (n=4)	0	25	50	25	100

As the reader can discern, the above rankings are excellent for any group of students, and they certainly would not be expected by individuals who would usually be considered likely for an "at risk" classification in school. At least 75% of the students at all grade levels were ranked in the upper one-half of their class by their grade-level teachers. In addition, some of the teachers indicated that the former family literacy student was the top student in the class, including one of the four third-grade students included in this study.

Although the above data were rankings by teachers, their rankings were somewhat validated by data from Indianapolis where all students within each school site were ranked for purposes of

determining who would qualify for Chapter 1 (a remedial program) by their performance on a standardized test. Those specific rankings by seven kindergarten students who were enrolled in a Kenan Trust family literacy program the previous year are presented below.

Table 7. Rank in Class by Seven Kindergarten Students Who Were Previously Enrolled in a Kenan Trust Model Family Literacy Program in Indianapolis, Indiana

Student	No. in Class	Rank in Class
A	22	6
B	60	3
C	22	2
D	22	1
E	33	5
F	18	5
G - scored too high to be considered for Chapter 1		

As seen in Table 7, all of those students were in the top half and possibly were in the top fourth of their class. It is possible that had all states tested the same way, similar data would have been produced at most of the sites included in this study.

Percent of students in remedial programs. The last data acquired about former family literacy students was in regard to how many had been retained or put into remedial programs in elementary school. In most programs, standardized tests are administered near the end of the school year, beginning with kindergarten students. The decision to retain or assign a student to a remedial-type class, i.e. a Chapter 1 or an "in transition" class which has a smaller-than-average number of students in the classroom, is a cooperative decision among teachers, administrators, and parents. The decision is usually based upon the standardized test score plus the teacher's recommendation which includes social behavior as well as academic achievement.

In some cases, when the student was placed in a remedial-type class, the teacher indicated that it was due to social behavior and not lack of academic ability. Therefore, in interpreting the data in the following table, the reader must keep in mind that reasons other than lack of academic ability sometimes cause the student to be placed in those classes. This also reinforces why part of the curriculum of the Kenan Trust family literacy model focuses on the social skill development of the children.

Data for this aspect of the follow-up study were dependent upon the acquisition of parental approval to review the students' records and obtain placement data. Because of several factors, including the time limitation of the research study, the difficulty in contacting some parents, and the reluctance of some parents to grant permission, not all students who were rated by teachers are included in this phase of the study. Numbers and corresponding percentages are provided in the table. However, for those students who were included in this phase of the study, none had been retained in the same grade. Three had been assigned to special education classes and are not included in these data.

Table 8. Percent of Former Students in Kenan Trust Model Family Literacy Programs Who Were or Were Not Assigned to a Remedial-type Class

Grade level	Percent Assigned	Percent Not Assigned	Total
First grade (n=29)	27	73	100
Second grade (n=19)	21	79	100
Third grade (n=4)	25	75	100

(comments by parents who were previously enrolled in the program)

"Once we enrolled in the program, our family didn't watch much television. The children wanted to read or color or wanted me to read to them. It was wonderful!"

"My child in first grade is only average in school performance, but without PACE [Kentucky's family literacy program], he would be at the bottom and never would have been ready for kindergarten. The skills he learned there, and at home, enabled him to do as well as he could, and he could never have kept up without them." (This comment was made by several parents.)

"My main goal now is to get off welfare and food stamps. As soon as I finish my nurse's training, I'll be there!" (She was in the third year of a four-year nurses' training program.)

(comments by teachers in the program and in the schools visited)

"Most parents have already tried homebound programs or adult basic education classes and have failed there. They seem to do better in this program because they are with their children."

"Parents are beginning to perceive schools more positively, overcoming their own previous negative experiences."

"The effects of this program on the personal grooming of the parents has been remarkable. They have begun to really be concerned about their appearance."

"I have taught ten years in kindergarten and first grade and I know about the different levels of entering skills and abilities of children. I can always tell which children have been in the family literacy program - they are always ahead of the others and are easier to move forward."

"The program has helped change parents' attitudes toward schools. After participating in the program, they are always more willing to come and talk about problems. They begin to see teachers and other school personnel as <u>people</u> and not as objects or authority figures. Also, they are more likely to volunteer to help in their childrens' classroom or wherever else they are needed."

"After a few weeks in the program, parents begin calling if they cannot attend class even if they have to go some distance to find a telephone. At first, they do not even think that calling is something which is important to anyone."

(anecdotes)

One parent indicated that after she passed the GED test, she convinced five of her brothers and sisters in four states - Florida (2), Indiana, Texas, and Wisconsin - to enroll in adult education classes. They have *all* passed their GED tests.

One parent who passed her GED test within a few months after entering the program became an aide in the family literacy program. Her goal now is to enroll in college and become an elementary teacher.

At one site, a mother came to the family literacy program one morning with her children. They had just been evicted from where they lived. The program staff helped find her a place to live - the first time she had ever had running water and indoor plumbing. They stated, "She may never pass the GED test, but the appearance, cleanliness, manners, and responsibility of both mother and children have improved markedly. For us, that is learning which is also very important."

A number of parents indicated that once they entered the program, life at home has changed in many ways. All television and music is turned off until homework for both parents and children is completed. The entire family now studies together because both parents and children can often help each other.

Because of her positive experiences in the family literacy program, one parent convinced her husband and her sister-in-law to enroll in the adult basic education in the community. At the time of the interview, the husband was close to passing the GED test and his sister wasn't far behind.

JUDGEMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

The Kenan Trust family literacy model was developed as a comprehensive approach to break the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy and undereducation. To achieve that purpose, the following goals (restated from pages 3-4) were established to guide the activities in local family literacy programs:

1. Increase the developmental skills of preschool children to prepare them for academic and social success in school;
2. Improve the parenting skills of the adult participant;
3. Raise the education level of parents of preschool children through instruction in basic skills;
4. Enable parents to become familiar with and comfortable in the school setting so they will participate in the education of their child;
5. Provide a role model for the child of parental interest in education;
6. Improve the relationship of the parent and child through planned, structured interaction which increases the influence of literacy in the home; and
7. Help parents gain the motivation, skills, and knowledge needed to become employed or to pursue further education or training.

Goal 1: Increase the developmental skills of preschool children to prepare them for academic and social success in school. Evidence that this goal is being met can be found in Tables 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8. Based upon the ratings by teachers and parents and by the rankings found in one program, there can be no doubt that the Kenan Trust model is quite effective in preparing preschool children for future success in school.

Goal 2: Improve the parenting skills of the adult participant. Following Table 1 is information about how parents feel they have changed "as parents of children in school" since participating in the family literacy program. Their responses indicate that this goal is definitely being met according to their perceptions. In addition, in the section on critical questions, family literacy program teaching staff rated how much they feel the parents have improved in regard to their parenting skills "during their enrollment in the program." Again, staff in 50% of the programs felt that the parents had attained "some" improvement, while staff in the remaining 50% of the programs rated the parents as having attained "much" improvement in their parenting skills.

Goal 3: Raise the educational level of parents of preschool children through instruction in basic skills. Many of the parents have passed the GED test while others are still pursuing that goal as indicated in the section following Table 1 entitled "Group learning activities." In addition, a

number feel that although they may not have passed that test, they have improved in their ability to learn and their confidence in their abilities has risen considerably. Not every adult student has a goal of acquiring a GED certificate. Some simply want to be able to read at a higher level, either at home or at work. Regardless, several parents have recruited friends and relatives into either the family literacy program or into the adult literacy program in their community or sometimes, in other communities and states. There is no doubt that education levels of the parents are being raised.

Goal 4: Enable parents to become familiar with and comfortable in the school setting so they will participate in the education of their child. "School-related" changes indicate that parents are definitely becoming more comfortable around schools. Some are becoming active volunteers in the school and other parents indicated that they would like to do so, but they are employed and cannot leave their jobs. Some parents indicated during the interview that in the past they tried to stay away from the school - it brought back too many bad memories. However, when they were asked to come in for a conference with a child's teacher, their usual mind-set was to "pick a fight" with the teacher or administrator because they simply felt "out of place and afraid" and their best means of overcoming those fears was to engage in an argument or debate. In many cases, they had no idea about the homework of their children because they couldn't read it.

Now, they read to their children, they help them with homework, and in some cases, families study together. Comments such as, "I now understand the problems of teachers a little better," and "They [teachers] aren't much different from anyone else" (expressed in positive tones) were not uncommon. In general, many now realize the importance of homework and intend to keep their children in school until they graduate from high school.

Goal 5: Provide a role model for the child of parental interest in education. Again, under the critical questions section, family literacy teachers were asked to rate their adult students on the amount of improvement they had attained as "role models" for their children. Seven percent responded, "little improvement," 50% responded, "some improvement," and 43% indicated that their parents had attained "much improvement" as role models for their children. In addition, parents who were former participants indicated that they now read more, they use the library, and some have enrolled in training programs or in college. Those are excellent examples of how parents are becoming role models for children by demonstrating their interest in educational endeavors.

However, the best example occurred in a small community in Kentucky. One parent was unable to pass the GED test. The teaching staff believed she was certainly competent to do so, and kept encouraging her to try again. However, everyone finally decided that she simply "froze up" in the timed-testing situation (the American Council on Education does not recommend that the GED test be timed!). However, she wanted a job very badly, so she enrolled in high school at 34 years of age! Not only was her family not encouraging or supporting her, neither were the other

students, the teachers, nor people in the community. However, she persisted the first semester, and because she could work at her own rate at home on her homework assignments, she began to succeed.

When she demonstrated that she also would keep up her housework and began studying with her children, everyone's attitude began to change. When her teen-aged son, also in school, recognized her in front of his peers and friends for her courage (something about being "real cool" for coming back to school), everything began to go much more smoothly and her goal was only a few months away when this study was in process. She stated, "I could never have done it without PACE (the family literacy program in Kentucky). Once I get that diploma, it'll have all been worth it!"

Goal 6: Improve the relationship of the parent and child through planned, structured interaction which increases the influence of literacy in the home. Data following Table 1 reflect progress toward this goal. Several self-expressed changes by parents indicate that they and their children are working together on school-related activities both in the home and even while riding the bus. In addition, children seem to be better listeners, want to be read to more often (which the parents are doing), and have become independent, freeing the parent to do other things (such as homework). There is much evidence that literacy has become a more important concept in many homes which previously did not give it much priority.

Goal 7: Help parents gain the motivation, skills, and knowledge needed to become employed or to pursue further education and training. Evidence that this goal is being reached is also found in the information following Table 1. Virtually all of the parents had employment as an important objective. Those single parents with small children still at home still contemplated going to work as soon as the children entered kindergarten. In some communities, there seemed to be sufficient opportunities for such optimism, but in others, both teachers and parents lamented the absence of employment opportunities in the local community. Nevertheless, most parents have identified the training or education they desire in order to become gainfully employed in the near future, and some have already taken measures to begin achieving their goal in the world of work.

<u>Comments and Anecdotes</u>
(comments by parents previously enrolled in the program)

"I wasn't committed to completing my GED studies until my ten year-old daughter indicated that just as soon as she was old enough, she would quit school. I explained the importance of education to her and told her how many times I wished I had finished high school. Then she asked, 'Are you going to finish this time?' I got my GED!"

"Since I entered the program, our whole family studies together now. We can help each other, especially me and my children in middle school and high school."

"Without the home visit, I wouldn't have come. Without PACE, I wouldn't have gotten my GED."

(comments by teachers in the program and in the schools visited)

"I have rated this student low, but you simply must understand. He tries hard and has good support from his mother. However, she has several children at home and cannot give him the extra help and attention he needs. She has approved his being tested for possible learning disabilities and that is the kind of support we need."

"We have one student who was originally assigned to the Chapter 1 class because of low test scores. However, her attitude and willingness to work hard were great, and as a result, we began to study her more closely. After talking with the parents, we requested an eye examination. The parent refused until we explained that we had a service club which would pay for the examination and the glasses, if needed. Once glasses were obtained, the child rapidly improved and is no longer in Chapter 1."

"We had one parent who progressed from no math skills to studying algebra in nine months. That's progress!"

(anecdotes)

At one site, from the group of parents enrolled during the first year of the family literacy program, one will soon graduate from college with a degree in nursing, another is pursuing a degree in elementary education, and several are employed in the local community.

In one program, the parents in the family literacy program read to the children in the first grade. Although usually scared at first, they have gradually gained much confidence in reading to children, especially to their own at home. In return, the first graders have made several "thank you" posters which are now displayed along the wall of the adults' classroom for everyone to see. Both groups have benefited from this activity.

One parent explained that her children, especially the one who was in family literacy with her, now correct her when she uses improper English. She is enrolled in the adult basic education class in the local community college studying to pass the GED test. The children know which nights the class meets and will not let her miss one night. On the other nights, they all study together.

In one school, a mother and daughter in the family literacy program had brought some rabbits and they were explaining how to care for them. The other children asked many questions, giving both a chance to attain status in the learning situation. The mother indicated that through this program, she and her daughter had learned to do many things together.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

As indicated previously, critical questions are those which are important to individuals who have most "at risk" in the program, i.e. participants, teachers, policymakers, etc. Those questions identified in this study are presented below with the responses from data acquired in this study.

1. *In how many program sites is family literacy being offered within a single school administrative unit?* In most schools, family literacy programs are offered at only one site. However, three of the 14 school systems included in this study had two family literacy sites. One of the two is usually designated a "primary site" which must have reached maximum enrollment before recruiting begins for the "secondary" site. Two of the programs with two sites seemed to have no enrollment problems, whereas the other program was having some problems maintaining full enrollments at both sites.

2. *How many families have been and/or are being served by a program during the year?* Virtually all programs maintained an enrollment of between 10 and 15 families per site, at all times, whereas one program was serving 45 families at two sites. Teachers indicated that with regular attendance, 15 families is about the maximum which could be served effectively. However, having regular attendance is one aspect which teachers in some programs indicated needs improving. A review of Table 1 will provide many of the problems with which these parents must contend while trying to improve their educational skills.

3. *Of the number being served, how many or what percent are anticipated to complete the program?* Staff at nine of the 12 (75%) sites indicated that over 70% of the parents would complete the program either by passing the GED test or by remaining in the program until the school year. Two programs felt that 60-70% of the families would complete, whereas one program anticipated only about half of the families would finish.

4. *Why do families, i.e. parents, leave the program before achieving their educational goals?* Sometimes, families leave the family literacy program for various reasons which have been identified by the staff members of the programs included in this study. They are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9. Reasons Why Parents Leave Family Literacy Programs Before Passing the GED or Before the Year has Ended as Identified by Teachers in the Programs in This Study
n=14

Reason	Number of Programs	Percent of Programs
moved away	13	93
interference by spouse (or significant other)	11	79
interference by other family member	7	50
employment - schedule conflicts with time class meets	11	79
passed GED test	10	71
pregnancy of parent	6	43
no child care available or affordable	6	43
birth of new baby	4	29
medical problems of parents	4	29
medical problems of other family members	4	29

Other reasons indicated by teachers in fewer than three programs included: conflicts with the law; no transportation available or affordable; male parent unwilling to care for children; intimidated by new social environment; completed regular high school program; hopelessness from failing the GED test several times; and youngest child entered kindergarten - so parent is no longer eligible to participate. As indicated above, not all spouses (almost always the male) are supportive of the other parent attending literacy classes. In addition, other family members, including parents and sometimes children, are not always favorable towards participation. Occasionally, illness in the family, including chronic illness, requires the time of the parent who must leave the program to care for a family member.

Passing the GED test requires a parent in Kentucky to leave the program, often depriving that parent from learning valuable parenting skills which may be of more value than academic skills at that time. This fact has been mentioned by teachers in several programs as a needed change in the legislation. The mobility of the population which family literacy is trying to serve is also evident from the teachers' responses. In essence, many of these same reasons have been found in the literature about adult literacy for years, and they continue to be formidable barriers to adults who aspire to raise their academic abilities.

5. *How do program staff recruit families and how effective do they feel their efforts are in that endeavor?* Some teachers feel that recruiting is the most difficult part of their program activities. As one stated, "If it wasn't for having to recruit, I would totally enjoy my job." In addition, teachers in some programs expressed the opinion that recruiting is becoming more difficult each year and they feel that those parents who were most interested probably entered the program during the first or second year of operation. Staff in 12 programs provided ratings of the recruitment efforts. Their responses are provided in Table 10. The rating scale utilized is shown below.

Scale

1 = not effective
2 = barely effective
3 = somewhat effective
4 = very effective
N/A = Not applicable (not used)

Table 10. Ratings of the Recruiting Methods Used by the Teachers in the Programs Included in This Study
n=12

	Ratings (percent of total)					
Recruiting method	1	2	3	4	N/A	Total
word-of-mouth (present students)	0	0	8	92	0	100
posters (at stores, laundry mats, etc.)	0	25	50	25	0	100
flyers (sent home from school)	0	16	42	42	0	100
flyers (left where people work)	8	16	42	8	26	100
public social agency referral	0	0	16	84	0	100
private service organizations	8	33	42	9	8	100
direct mailers to potential students	0	25	33	42	0	100
talks to various organizations	8	42	42	8	0	100
radio announcements	0	16	25	33	26	100
home visits by staff	0	8	16	68	8	100
talks at school functions	8	0	42	16	34	100
newspaper advertising	0	16	34	50	0	100
recruiting by former students	0	0	8	58	34	100

Other methods mentioned by some programs included: local television announcements; referrals from related programs, i.e. Head Start; booths at fairs and festivals; approaching people on the street; and during screening for the "four-year-old" program (Kentucky). Three methods seemed to work best: word-of-mouth by present students, public social agency referral, and home visits by staff. The first two methods are shown, through literature, to be effective in other literacy programs, but home visits are somewhat unique to family literacy. However, in some programs, teachers indicated that they didn't like this method because they felt they were "invading the private space of the families." Other teachers indicated that many times, although at home, parents won't come to the door to talk to them, and they become discouraged.

The important thing to recognize is that different methods work differently from one community to another. For example, "flyers sent home from school" received mixed ratings, but at one program site the majority of parents who were in attendance the day the researcher visited had been recruited in that manner. The lower responses to that method seemed to come from the sites more urban in nature.

6. *How much can participants in the family literacy programs be expected to improve during one year (nine months) of operation?* This question usually generated the response - "It depends on the individual(s). There is a wide range of improvement in academic, parenting, and social skills among the family participants." After the visits to first three sites, the researcher determined that a number of more specific categories were emerging from the responses to this question and developed a four-point rating scale that included all of the categories which could be identified from the previous data. These then, were returned to the previously-visited sites for their responses and also utilized for the remainder of the data acquisition activities. However, a few additional categories were added, occasionally, at the recommendation of the teachers at sites visited later. Since the data were acquired during April, it was felt that teachers' ratings would be valid for the past regular year (September-May). The data pertaining to parents are found in Table 11 and those which relate to children are in Table 12. The rating scale used for both tables is found below.

Rating Scale

1 = no improvement
2 = little improvement
3 = some improvement
4 = much improvement

Table 11. Teachers' Ratings of How Much Improvement Parents Had made During the Year in Regard to Selected Concepts in the Programs Included in This Study
n=14

Concepts	Ratings (percent of total) 1	2	3	4	Total
self-improvement	0	0	36	64	100
motivation to learn	0	0	36	64	100
initiative	0	0	64	36	100
openness to others' viewpoints	0	0	29	71	100
social skills	0	0	36	64	100
awareness of their capabilities	0	0	29	71	100
literacy skills					
reading	0	0	43	57	100
writing	0	0	43	57	100
oral communication	0	7	43	50	100
written communication	0	0	43	57	100
listening	7	7	43	43	100
parenting skills	0	0	50	50	100
preparation to enter the workforce	0	7	53	40	100
group interaction skills	0	7	14	79	100
decision-making	1	7	56	36	100
commitment to continue learning, beyond the literacy program	0	7	43	50	100
role model for children	0	7	50	43	100
personal grooming	0	14	22	64	100
learning with one's children	0	0	14	86	100
knowledge of child development	0	7	50	43	100
awareness of what they can do with their children	0	0	22	78	100
understanding of the age of appropriate behavior of children	0	0	57	43	100
health habits	7	0	50	43	100

The most important learning which can be acquired by parents in a family literacy program is how to learn with one's children. That concept was rated highest by the teachers, indicating that parents are, indeed, acquiring that knowledge while also becoming aware of what all they can do with their children. In addition, parents are also becoming aware of their own capabilities, becoming more open to others' viewpoints, and improving their group interaction skills. Although these may not all be stated in the criteria in the previous section, they are implied in many ways and are certainly important in the development of parents of young children who are about to enter school.

Table 12. Teachers' Ratings of How Much Improvement Children Had Made During the Year in Regard to Selected Concepts in the Programs Included in This Study

n=14

Concepts	Ratings (percent of total) 1	2	3	4	Total
ability to make choices	0	0	7	93	100
ability to make decisions about what to do and how to do it	0	0	14	86	100
ability to identify, pursue, and complete one's own goals	0	7	22	71	100
ability to work with other children	0	0	22	78	100
ability to work with adults	0	0	43	57	100
knowledge of different kinds of objects	0	0	22	78	100
skill in art	0	7	43	50	100
comfort in one's physical environment	0	0	0	100	100
ability to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings	0	0	29	71	100
ability to tell about experiences	0	0	36	64	100
ability to dramatize experiences	0	14	50	36	100
ability to graphically represent experiences	0	22	64	14	100
ability to comprehend others' spoken communications	0	7	14	79	100
ability to comprehend others' written communications	14	22	36	28	100
ability to comprehend others' graphic communications	7	7	50	36	100
self-concept (self-motivation)	0	0	7	93	100
social skills	0	0	7	93	100
use of creativity	0	0	29	71	100
amount of initiative	0	0	36	64	100
openness to others' viewpoints	0	7	50	43	100
amount of curiosity	0	0	14	86	100
sharing with others	0	0	7	93	100

According to the teachers, children in the family literacy programs in this study are learning to be comfortable in their physical environment, a prerequisite for being successful when entering kindergarten and elementary school. They reinforce parents' responses that some ways their children had changed from being in the program included: more independent, can leave mother, no longer shy around other people, can work and play with other children, etc. In addition, children are becoming better at making decisions, are sharing with others much better, have become very curious (wanting to learn), and have a much better self-concept. Again, these are among the most important concepts which children must learn in order to be successful in school. It is evident that the children did not possess these skills to any great extent upon entering the family literacy program.

7. *What linkages have been made with other agencies and organizations in the community which might help in the success of the program?* In most instances, other agencies have services to offer family literacy programs and the program staff should cultivate cooperative efforts with them for assistance in recruiting, public relations, and sometimes even funding. Staff in 11 programs provided data for this study in regard to the kinds of agencies they had contacted in this regard. Those data are in Table 13.

Table 13. Agencies and Organizations Which Were Providing Services to the Family Literacy Programs in This Study
n=11

Agency or Organization	Number of programs	Percent of programs
social services agency	11	100
human resources (AFDC)	11	100
social insurance (food stamps)	10	91
Cooperative Extension Service	10	91
local businesses	9	82
rural (county) health agency	8	73
state health agency	7	66
churches	6	55
mental health agency	6	55
public housing	5	46
service clubs	4	36

Many services are provided to the family literacy program. At some sites, a caseworker, social worker, or counselor is available when needed. Various agencies refer parents to the program and others include brochures in mailings to their clients or employees. Groups invite the program staff to speak about the program and indicate their needs. Some local restaurants provide discount coupons to families in the program or provide a free meal to the family when the parent receives the GED certificate. At one site, the parent who had the best attendance received a free meal from a local restaurant for the entire family.

One of the best examples of collaboration was in a town in Kentucky. At that site, the PACE program and the Head Start program are housed together. In some communities, these two programs are viewed as competitors, particularly by the staff of both programs. In this community, however, they both share the same facility, the same transportation vehicles, and the same food service. In addition, they both recruited for each other. For example, if a parent (usually the mother) comes to the Head Start program to enroll a child, she is asked if she completed her high school education. If she answers "no," then the Head Start staff member takes her across the hall to the PACE program staff who inform her about the family literacy program. The staff members of both programs indicated that the problem of illiteracy is too big for conflicts and we need to work together as much as possible.

8. *Are there differences between those children who have been in a family literacy program and older siblings who have not?* When asked to compare their children who had participated in the program with older siblings when they were the same age, parents' responses could be grouped into two categories. Those are presented below with the responses listed in the order of the frequency with which they were received.

A. Child in family literacy programs:

Better prepared for kindergarten
Makes faster progress
Learns faster
Loves to go to school
Is more interested in learning
Is a better listener at home
Is really excited about going to kindergarten
Child requires less time from parent - is more independent
Child keeps room neater - keeps things picked up
Could read and write when entering kindergarten

B. Older sibling who did not attend the program:

Didn't want to go to school
Still doesn't like school - having some problems
Doesn't get along with others nearly as well as other child
Much slower in reading
Could not read nor write anything when entering kindergarten
More backward and shy
Is in Chapter 1 program (or is in special education class) - parents believe children wouldn't be if they had been in the family literacy program;
Doesn't like learning - refuses to do homework

Some parents perceived no differences between the children, whereas other parents felt that the child in the program was influencing the older sibling(s) to do better. A few parents indicated that the older sibling is now more interested in learning and is making better grades in school. Others indicated that the older sibling now asks for help with homework.

9. *Are there specific strengths or areas of needed improvement which kindergarten and elementary teachers can generally identify in students who have participated in the Kenan Trust family literacy program?* When asked to identify strengths or needed improvement among these students, teachers had a variety of responses, but none were given much more frequently than some others. Those indicated under "strengths" included: is curious, gets along well with others, follows directions, works hard, completes work on time, cooperative, volunteers answers to questions, and has a good attitude about school. Under "needs improvement," responses included: talks when should be listening, too shy (should try harder), short attention span (easily

distracted), doesn't organize well, too aggressive at play, works too fast (poor quality), and works too slow. There were no clear patterns to the responses and in general, they seem to reflect responses which would be given for any group of children in their early years in school.

10. *What concerns do teachers in the family literacy program have about the program?* Teachers expressed several kinds of concerns about the program and some of the components. They are presented below.

A. Some parents have learning disabilities and will never pass the GED test. They attend classes faithfully and work hard and have hopes of passing, especially when several of their classmates are successful. The "let down" from failing affects everyone in the program. Can't some kind of special recognition be given for them by the state or federal agency?

B. In general, recruiting is becoming more difficult and those parents who enroll are coming in at much lower academic levels. They make slower progress and are less likely to pass the GED test in one year. Since they can no longer participate in this program next year, they often do not continue pursing the GED certificate. Something must be done. *Everyone* loses when that happens. Why not let them continue next year even if they have no children of the appropriate age?

C. Sporadic attendance hinders progress and program effectiveness. Anything which can be done to enhance (or even require) attendance would be a valuable asset for everyone. Once we get them started, they seldom want to quit.

D. Scheduled lunch times are sometimes a problem. Nobody is ever ready for lunch at 10:00 A.M., or even 10:30 A.M. This also disrupts family eating schedules at home because the children are ready to eat at that time on the days they are not in school.

E. The introduction of public education for all four year-old children (in Kentucky) may hurt the PACE program. Many parents would rather send their children to school than attend with them. That takes from the very essence of family literacy - parents and children learning together.

F. We need more help in understanding how the CASAS test fits into assessing parents' skills for studying for the GED test. We know how to use the TABE test well, but are unclear about CASAS.

G. We need more opportunities to meet with other family literacy teachers during the year. We learn much from each other and help each other when we can.

Comments and Anecdotes
(comments by parents who were previously enrolled in the program)

"There needs to be some way to require parents to attend. Some of us did not want to attend, but once we started, it was wonderful. Unless parents are made to attend, most will never be helped."

"There would be more parents enrolled if they had transportation. Why can't the county and city school systems cooperate and help mothers get to the program? Why must they always fight about it while mothers suffer for lack of an education?"

"The age limits should be expanded. Just because a parent has children in elementary school, doesn't he or she need parenting skills just as much as anyone else? What about those with younger children? Don't they need them too?"

(comments by teachers in the program and in the schools visited)

"After many shocks about the lives and living conditions of the family members, you think there cannot possibly be any more surprises. You are always wrong."

"One of the most important things I have learned by working in the program is self discipline. We try to practice what we preach."

"Serving only three and four year-old children is very limiting, both in terms of enrollment and range of needs being served. The age range of eligibility should be expanded."

(anecdotes)

At one site, recruiting was becoming somewhat difficult because a new employer had come to the community and many mothers were taking jobs (at minimum wages). The staff was trying to develop a proposal to hold classes at night. Several mothers indicated they would participate.

Another program had been helped in enrollment while a local employer had required a high school diploma or equivalency for employment. When the requirements were lowered, enrollment became a problem because many mothers became employed in low-paying jobs without the GED certificate.

VALUING

Why do people value programs? As indicated previously, different people value the same thing differently and reporting those values is a matter of presenting those statements, actions, and expressed feelings as accurately as possible. Therefore, the following data are presented as they were received by the researcher with no revisions or alterations in any way. No judgment values are made in regard to them.

Comments and Anecdotes
(comments by parents, both formerly and presently enrolled)

"This program gives parents an opportunity to not only learn basic skills, but to learn how to be better parents. It encourages them to keep children in school."

"The support of a spouse [in most cases, the husband] is crucial. I would not attend during my first marriage because my husband prevented it. In my second marriage, my husband was a little more supportive, but he was used to me being at home. When I showed him things would not be much different - I would always be home in time to cook supper and would clean house in weekends - he became supportive, helpful, and finally, proud of me. A few times when I wanted to stay home, he even made me go to class, and kept me in the program when I wanted to quit."

"I tried the adult education classes at night, but my husband didn't want me going. He didn't mind me and our child going in the daytime."

"Somehow, programs must be advertised more widely. I was unaware of the program in our community for two years or I would have enrolled sooner."

(comments by teachers in the program and in the schools visited)

"This has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. We must get the children learning as soon as possible with the parents modeling the value of education to them."

"I really respect these families who are trying to improve themselves. They don't have many clothes, they often don't have indoor plumbing, and sometimes don't even have running water in the home."

"In general, husbands are not supportive, at first. The woman's place is in the home and he expects her to be there. However, we are finally seeing some improvement."

"This program is exciting. You can see progress in parents' learning, children's learning, and in parent-child relationships. The changes in knowledge and its uses (both observed and reported from home) are often amazing."

"We had one parent who indicated from the first day in the program that she disciplined her kids by 'hitting.' She had been taught that through hitting her kids, they knew she loved them. By the end of the year, she hadn't passed her GED test (although she was close), but she had stopped hitting her kids and was talking to them instead. We believe that's real progress and maybe even more important than getting the GED certificate."

"I have rated this (elementary) student low on the concepts. However, I should point out that although he is bright enough to do good work, there is no support at home. Whatever I send home for parents' approval never returns. The parents can read. They just don't care about this child."

"Exposure to a learning environment which also emphasizes social skills at an early age is conducive to becoming a successful student in later years. I believe the PACE program gives children an excellent beginning. These two students in my classroom are proof of that."

(anecdotes)

In one state, the governor visited some of the parents who were in the program. Upon learning that one had written some poetry after enrolling in the program, he invited her to sit with him during a legislative session. Eventually, she read some of her poetry to the legislators that day. She was "scared to death," but did just fine.

A teacher at one site in Kentucky was told that because her salary was getting higher each year, the program could no longer support her and she would have to move into a kindergarten or elementary classroom the next year. She told her supervisor to "cut my salary to whatever level is needed." She sees too much change occurring to ever want to leave the family literacy program.

A parent and her child were in the supermarket when another lady inquired about the age of the child. Upon learning that the child was four years of age, the lady asked if the parent had a high school diploma. When the parent said she didn't, the lady began to tell her about the family literacy program. The family enrolled and has indicated how lucky she was to have been told about the program. It has caused a number of positive changes in the home.

One morning a parent came to the program with *all* her children. She had been evicted from her home and they had only the clothes on their backs. The program staff members found a place for them to live and some help with the first month's rent. However, they were somewhat shocked to learn that this was the first time this family had ever had running water and indoor plumbing where they lived.

In one town, parents and their small daughter were driving down the street in their pick-up truck past the superintendent's home when he came out into the street and stopped them. He asked the age of the child and then asked if the parents if they had completed high school. Upon learning the mother had not, he told them about the family literacy program and invited her and the child to enroll. They did, the mother passed the GED test, and now she has a part-time job in the community.

In one school where the high school alternative education classes and the family literacy program are housed in the same building, some of the older alternative students read to the children

on a regular basis. Not only has some positive bonding occurred between the two groups of students, but one alternative education student brought the Dr. Suess books he had been given when a child and donated them to the program. He told the staff he wanted those kids to have them so they could learn to like reading and not grow up like him.

One mother and child in Kentucky were featured on a television program about family literacy. A lady in Pennsylvania was impressed with the daughter and her struggle to learn to read and has become a pen pal with her. On special occasions, she sends books to the daughter, about 150 so far. The daughter sends her grade reports and other progress materials to her pen pal in Pennsylvania, who constantly encourages her to remain in school.

At the end of the day, the teacher brought a little boy in the program to the supervisor's office and indicated that he'd "had a good day." Apparently, he didn't have too many good days, but when he did, he received much reinforcement, i.e. hugs, praise, etc., from the staff. It was beginning to make a difference because the number of good days was beginning to increase.

CONCLUSIONS

Two major conclusions (plus several other concluding statements) can be emphasized from the data in this study:

1. *The Kenan Trust family literacy model has been demonstrated as a successful intervention strategy for breaking the cycle of illiteracy which plagues millions of families in the United States.* Although the holding power of the model should continue to be validated as the students proceed through middle and high school years, and parents' attitudes and subsequent behaviors in regard to education and family values should also be monitored, the model shows much promise in providing those kinds of changes in the lives of program participants for which the staff at the National Center for Family Literacy had hoped. Data in the section, "Proof of Effect," comments by teachers, and many of the anecdotes provide ample evidence that the system works.

2. *Both parents and children from low-income, "at risk" families can succeed in the academic setting while changing their lives in their home situation if provided the opportunity to "learn how to learn together" in an environment which is not only non-threatening, but which also constantly demonstrates and reinforces positive values.* This has been promoted about children in the literature for several years, but now there is the same kind of data for both parents *and* children. Parents not only learn academic knowledge in pursuit of the GED certificate, but they also become teachers of their youngest children and co-learners with their older children in the home. That is the main difference between this approach and those which foster intergenerational literacy without the strong family component.

3. Through participating in the family literacy program, parents gain confidence in (1) their own abilities, (2) those of their children, and (3) in the operations of the schools. This confidence, in turn, usually translates into more active participation in their children's school activities and in pursuing their own work-related career goals.

In addition to the above, there are other concluding statements which are important to the purpose of this study:

1. Although acquiring a GED certificate is important, parenting skills are equally important for the future success of the family, both academically and socially. This was expressed by many parents and teachers in the family literacy program. In addition, teachers in the schools indicated that social behavior was one criterion used in deciding if a child should be assigned to a remedial-type class for the next year.

2. Positive attitudes toward and support for schools are fostered among parents who participate in the family literacy program. These, in turn, replace the previous negative feelings which most of those parents had about education and schools. They also develop a long-term commitment to keeping their children in school until they achieve their high school diplomas.

3. Parents who have failed in other literacy programs apparently succeed in family literacy programs because they are learning the value of education with their children and the family becomes mutually supportive in their educational endeavors.

4. Most children in family literacy programs achieve as well as or better than their peers, both academically and socially, at least through third-grade levels. In addition, they achieve better than their older siblings who did not participate in the program.

5. The family literacy program enables parents to overcome a multitude of major problems in pursuing their education. Support from program staff often goes "beyond the call of duty" in assisting families who, for many reasons, cannot plan beyond the next few days in their lives.

6. Local program staff, other school personnel, and former students recruit parents for the program. Although recruiting seems to be becoming more difficult, teachers are using a variety of methods to reach potential families, including linking with a number of community agencies and organizations for assistance in recruiting and other program activities. This, in turn, illustrates the value of the program as perceived by the people in the communities.

7. Program staff desire to meet with teachers from other programs to share problems and learn from each other. The main concerns seem to be recruitment, attendance, and assessment procedures.

8. The goals of the National Center for Family Literacy are being met through the program activities utilized within the Kenan Trust Model. This is reflected in the responses by parents, family literacy program staff members, and teachers in kindergarten and elementary school programs. In addition, school administrators support the program and assist it in many ways.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations for the future are based upon the conclusions, the researcher's observations, and other data found in the report.

1. This kind of research should continue, perhaps not annually, but periodically, particularly in those sites which have been in existence longest and have the most follow-up data to acquire. More emphasis must be put into *affective* kinds of data, particularly attitudes and opinions of parents toward education in the early part of the program. Post-hoc data do not reflect change and that is what we are supposed to be promoting. However, testimonial evidence is one thing - hard evidence that such change really occurred is more meaningful.

2. In conducting that research, a wider geographic range of sites must be included in order to determine if the findings in this study hold up in different cultural settings. In addition, more time must be spent at each site so that more complete data can be obtained. For example, in this report, only one day per site was scheduled because the researcher did not perceive that at most sites previous family literacy students would now be located in several elementary schools located some distance apart. This negated the possibility of obtaining data from all of the teachers who now had those students in their classrooms. In addition, more time is needed to locate parents at home by telephone, especially in the evening, when such contact may be possible.

3. The data pertaining to teachers' concerns should be shared with program administrators so appropriate actions can be taken in regard to maintaining program quality. The teaching staff, in general, is the most dedicated, competent group of individuals I have met in professional education. They must continue to be supported by everyone who can do so.

4. The National Center for Family Literacy should continue to disseminate the training program which has proven so successful. In order to have much impact, a much wider audience must be reached on a national basis now that the model has been shown to be effective with families in literacy programs.

5. There must be a continuous effort to emphasize that parenting skills are as important as academic skills, if not more so. The need for a GED is great for employment purposes, but many parents expressed the changing conditions in the home as most important to them. They also indicated that that is the key for keeping their children in school until they complete a high school education.

6. More efforts must be made to determine the extent of the problems of parents identified in this study. These data must then be shared with policymakers so that they more understand the kinds of needs these programs have in addition to the regular educational program requirements.

7. When the next phase of this study is conducted, more advanced notice should be given to local programs before the evaluator(s) arrive at the site. Because of the limited time available to the evaluator, some sites received the evaluation materials describing the activities to be conducted only a few days prior to his arrival. As a result, staff at some sites were unable to secure approval to view their children's records from all of the parents they had wanted. More advanced notice would have allowed for that possibility.

8. More time should be allowed per site visit. For this study, only one day per site was scheduled because the evaluator was unaware that the children who had participated in the family literacy program at one common site would be scattered among several schools within one county in kindergarten and elementary classes. Therefore, there was insufficient time, within one day, to physically contact all of the teachers who had those students in their classrooms in order to obtain their ratings and rankings on the students. In addition, this would have allowed time to contact more parents in the community, if desired.

9. In the training conducted for implementing the Kenan Trust model programs, Center staff should include some time to train local program personnel to assist in obtaining some of the needed follow-up data. These data not only would be important to the Center, but to local program staff as well. In addition, if they are a part of the follow-up and evaluation process, local staff should also perceive the process more positively than through viewing the activity as an "external" event only.

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